

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) In a system wherein a first endpoint is providing data to a plurality of second endpoints each connected by a point-to-point communication channel with said first endpoint, an automatic method for optimizing the transmission of said data to said plurality of second endpoints comprising the following steps:

- a. said first endpoint activating a multicast communication channel having a first multicast address and commencing broadcast of said data over said multicast communication channel;
- b. said first endpoint transmitting a request message to each of said plurality of second endpoints in order to query each of said second endpoints whether they can receive transmissions broadcast to said first multicast address;
- c. certain of said plurality of second endpoints transmitting an acknowledgment message and said first endpoint receiving said acknowledgment message;
- d. for each said acknowledgment message received from said certain of said plurality of second endpoints which indicates that said certain of said plurality of second endpoints can receive transmissions broadcast to said first multicast address, deactivating said point-to-point communication channel with said first endpoint and said certain of said plurality of second endpoints; and
- e. terminating said broadcast of said data and said multicast communication channel if at least two of said plurality of second endpoints do not transmit said acknowledgment messages containing a positive acknowledgment.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of receiving detach messages from certain of said plurality of second endpoints, and if at least two of said plurality of second endpoints are not receiving said data, then terminating said broadcast of said data and said multicast communication channel.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said each acknowledgment message includes a response code.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein said response code indicates whether each said certain of said plurality of second endpoints can receive transmissions broadcast to said first multicast address.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said data includes teleconference data.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising, prior to said step of said first endpoint activating said multicast communication channel having a first multicast address, determining whether more than one of said plurality of second endpoints is coupled to said first endpoint on a single communication medium, and if not, aborting said method.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6 further comprising, prior to said first endpoint activating said multicast communication channel having said first multicast address, determining whether said single communication medium supports broadcasting to said first multicast address.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said data includes teleconference data between said first endpoint and said plurality of second endpoints.

9. (Original) An apparatus in a first endpoint for transmitting data to a plurality of second endpoints receiving said data from said first endpoint on point-to-point communication channels comprising:

- a. a circuit for activating a multicast communication channel having a first multicast address and commencing broadcast of said data over said multicast communication channel;
- b. a circuit for transmitting a request message to each of said plurality of second endpoints in order to query each of said second endpoints whether they can receive transmissions broadcast to said first multicast address;
- c. a circuit for receiving acknowledgment messages, if any, from certain of said plurality of second endpoints;
- d. a circuit for deactivating each said point-to-point communication channel with said certain of said plurality of second endpoints responsive to receiving each said acknowledgment message; and

e. a circuit for terminating said broadcast of said data and said multicast communication channel if at least two of said acknowledgment messages containing a positive acknowledgment are not received.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 further comprising a circuit for receiving detach messages from others of said plurality of second endpoints, and if at least two of said plurality of second endpoints are not receiving said data, then terminating said broadcast of said data and said multicast communication channel.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said each acknowledgment message includes a response code.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein said response code indicates whether each of said certain of said plurality of second endpoints can receive transmissions broadcast to said first multicast address.

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said data includes teleconference data.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 further comprising a detection circuit operative prior to said first endpoint activating said multicast communication channel having said first multicast address for determining whether more than one of said plurality of second endpoints is coupled to said first endpoint on a single communication medium, and if not, not activating said circuits b and c.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14 further comprising, prior to activation of said detection circuit a circuit for determining whether said single communication medium supports broadcasting to said first multicast address.

16. (Previously Added) In a system wherein a first endpoint is providing data to a plurality of second endpoints each connected by a point-to-point communication channel with said first endpoint, an automatic method for optimizing the transmission of said data to said plurality of second endpoints comprising the following steps:

- a. said first endpoint activating a multicast communication channel having a first multicast address and commencing broadcast of said data over said multicast communication channel;
- b. said first endpoint transmitting a request message to each of said plurality of second endpoints in order to query each of said second endpoints whether they can receive transmissions broadcast to said first multicast address;
- c. certain of said plurality of second endpoints transmitting an acknowledgement message and said first endpoint receiving said acknowledgement message;
- d. for each said acknowledgement message received from said certain of said plurality of second endpoints which indicates that said certain of said plurality of second endpoints can receive transmissions broadcast to said first multicast address, deactivating said point-to-point communication channel with said first endpoint and said certain of said plurality of second endpoints; and
- e. terminating said broadcast of said data and said multicast communication channel if a predetermined condition regarding said acknowledgement messages from said plurality of second endpoints is satisfied.

17. (Previously Added) A method for merging a first teleconference call including a first member and one or more other members with a second teleconference call including the first member and a second member, comprising:

a conference component of the first member transmitting a merge request message to a conference component of the second member requesting merger of the first teleconference call with the second teleconference call, the merge request message identifying the one or more other members of the first teleconference call;

a conference component of the second member receiving the merge request message and transmitting a join message to conference components of the one or more other members; and

the conference components of the first member, the second member and the one or more other members establishing one teleconference call.

18. (Previously Added) Circuitry in a conference component of a member of a first teleconference call for merging the first teleconference call with a second teleconference call, comprising:

circuitry for receiving a merge request message from a common member of both the first and second teleconference calls, the merge request message identifying one or more other members of the second teleconference call;
circuitry for transmitting a join message to the one or more other members; and
circuitry for establishing a single teleconference call with the common member and the one or more other members of the second teleconference call.

19. (Previously Added) Circuitry in a conference component of a member of both a first teleconference call and a second teleconference call for merging the first teleconference call with the second teleconference call, comprising:

circuitry for transmitting a merge request message to a second member of the first teleconference call, the merge request message identifying one or more other members of the second teleconference call.

20. (Previously Added) An apparatus for merging a first teleconference call including a first member and one or more other members with a second teleconference call including the first member and a second member, comprising:

circuitry in a conference component of the first member for transmitting a merge request message to a conference component of a second member requesting merger of the first teleconference call with the second teleconference call, the merge request message identifying the one or more other members of the first teleconference call;

circuitry in the conference component of the second member for receiving the merge request message and transmitting a join message to conference components of the one or more other members; and

circuitry in the conference components of the first member, the second member and the one or more other members for establishing one teleconference call responsive to the join request messages.